

Pre-K Teaching Times

Thank You

Dear Pre-K Teachers,

Thank you for...

- Loving what you do because if you didn't, it might not get done.
- Being there to say, "Yes, you can!" when a child says, "I can't."
- Realizing that the

future is now and for knowing that what children learn in pre-k affects them for a lifetime.

- Constantly learning more so children can learn more.
- Helping children to discover their passion and strength.
- Making every day

count.

- Helping children learn to love learning.
- ALL you do every day in Georgia's Pre-K Program.

With gratitude and respect,

BFTS Staff



May 2013

Inside this issue:

Making a Difference 2

Making a Difference 3

Making a Difference 4

Teacher to Teacher 4

Assessment 5

Family Connections 5

Fun in Pre-K 6

20-Year Celebration 7

Teacher Highlight 7

Making a Difference

I have found these games called *I have, Who has*. The original idea came from Karen Cox, a Georgia Pre-K teacher with a website called Prekinders. She has awesome ideas, and I'd like to toot her horn for the things she creates. Many people know about the site, but I think it will be beneficial to post her site in a newsletter for those not aware of the resource. I used her shapes and colors *I have, Who has* game and then took the idea further and found alphabet versions and have now created sight word versions for my students who are ready to learn sight words. The children love the games and enjoy playing all the versions. It's amazing how fast they pick up on how to play.

Kristin Cox

Porterdale Elementary

This year one of my success stories involves learning centers and clean up time following center time. My assistant teacher and I spent more time at the beginning of and throughout the year to ensure students understood the clean-up procedures and the use of labels and pictures; our learning centers have been much nicer without us having to go behind the students to pick and clean up behind them. By making them more responsible for cleaning, we have also given the children pride in a job well-done! Many times now we hear students telling each other if they are not doing it correctly and to look at the pictures so they know where or how it goes.

Mrs. Patricia Fross

Sumter County Primary School

Pre-K Teacher

Making a Difference

The Story of a Challenging Child, who has turned out to be the "Light of my Life."

Before the first day of school, we had an open house where I met "E" for the first time. E, a four-year-old boy was going to be in my class and I knew right away that something was SPECIAL about E. But I did not realize how special he really was. I knew he was going to be a challenging student and thought I was in for a rough year. During the first weeks of school, I evaluated E to determine if my initial thoughts about him were accurate, as I wanted to be sure before discussing my notes, assessments, etc. with Laura Johnson at BFTS and Mandy Smith at Quality Care for Children. When Mandy evaluated E, she too realized the SPECIAL boy in my class and noticed some of the same challenges that I did. Together we developed modifications, adaptations, and accommodations for E, and I immediately began implementing them.

This was not my first experience with a "special needs student," but I thought that this was a lot to do for just one student. However, I realized that putting a plan of action into place would not only help E, but would help our day run much smoother and benefit him and the other students in my class. After all, inclusion is about belonging, and I wanted to be able to not

only benefit E, but also the students in my class without disabilities. I knew that successful inclusion requires planning, training, and support, and I was willing to do whatever I had to for the "Light of my Life."

I began modifying the classroom environment for E by creating a safe place for him, which was an immediate "hit." This was a special place that I created for E" to go when he needed to be by himself to calm down, or just get away from others. Within approximately two weeks of following Mandy's other suggestions, and going "outside the box to add my own touch," I began to see changes in E. He began adjusting to our environment, our expectations, and E soon realized that he was a part of our class.

Within the first month of school, E no longer banged his head on the glass windows and doors; he no longer ran all over the classroom; he stopped screaming and having tantrums and made many more advances. With Mandy and Laura's assistance, we put E on a modified day which helped him slowly transition into the Pre-K environment. Along the way we had a few set backs, but each day, week, and month got better. In January, E began coming to school for a full day. The first week was rough, but after the second week, E adjusted and smoothly transitioned into a full 6.5 hour day.

Even though it has taken ALL YEAR long to get E evaluated through the school system, I have realized throughout this experience how one SPECIAL child has changed my thinking. I have learned how to accommodate a special needs child (even with many initial challenges) and make him a part of our class without the students even realizing that he is SPECIAL. E has come a long way from the first day of school. He has made friends and done well. From this experience I have learned that **effective inclusion** is hard and doesn't happen overnight, but with the right support children with special needs can thrive in an inclusion classroom. I've come to realize that E was put into my life to help him learn and grow. He has brought me more joy than he will ever know, and I'm so glad that I have this special boy in my class. He truly is the "Light of my Life."

*Donnamarie Dane
Pre-K Teacher
Kiddie Kollege*

Making a Difference

I would like to comment on how much I enjoyed the online class, "Behavior Has Meaning." Throughout the years in Pre-K, teachers have asked for a workshop to help with behavior and this workshop gave me fresh ideas to use with my class. It identified things in my class that I changed to help with transitions, large group, and center time behaviors. I recommend this workshop to experienced teachers as well as new teachers. I have always been a firm believer that you should always work to improve your level of instruction from year to year. Behavior greatly influences classroom effectiveness. This workshop provided strategies to implement in your classroom to help with behaviors so that teachers could be more effective.

Becky Pinson
Bacanton Charter School

I thank the person(s) responsible for selecting me for the My Teaching Partner portion of the CLASS program. I have thoroughly "enjoyed" the involvement in it. My teaching partner, Mrs. Laura Johnson, has been an excellent coach. She has been supportive as she guided me through the cycles. Mrs. Johnson provided many insights that benefitted my video lessons and my teaching in general. Because of her, I feel validated in the teaching methods I have acquired during my teaching career of nearly 40 years. I have learned to be more intentional in my teaching style.

My students have benefitted greatly in this program as well.

They know that the teachers in the classroom genuinely care about them and their ability to learn concepts in learning styles that suit them. Thank you again for choosing me!

Marta Holsey,
Friendship Child Care Pre-K

I have had multiple students in my class this year who have had difficulty adjusting to the routine of school. I was purposeful in the beginning of the year to work with these students to help them achieve just a little success in the classroom. While I want each of my students to be successful, I wanted these particular students to achieve something in their personal life that they had never attempted to do.

One particular student joined our class in the beginning of the year. He came with a lot of emotional baggage from a difficult family situation. If something did not go the way he wanted or he wasn't always first at everything, he would get mad. He would also get upset with other students and become angry and physically aggressive. We set some goals in the beginning of the year to help him identify when he was becoming out of control. When we first started working on this, I would have to step to the side with him, away from other students, and let him calm down before he was able to return to the group. Sometimes regaining control of himself took awhile. However, over time he began to identify when he was upset, and now I only have to ask him to calm his body, and he immediately begins to correct himself. Many times he will remove himself from the situation until he

can calm his body without me saying anything. I am so proud of the progress he has made, and I feel that he has been successful in learning to control his anger and aggression with others.

Thank you for the opportunity to teach these young minds and to have the opportunity to use the passion and calling I have for something I truly enjoy.

Stephanie Roberts
YMCA Paulding Pre-K Teacher

As a Pre-K Consultant, one of the highlights of my year has been working with four Pre-K lead teachers from Savannah on the My Teaching Partner project. Watching their teaching practices change and become more intentional as they implement the strategies learned through our work around the CLASS Dimensions has been awesome!

I am so proud of their progress!

Judy Blasengame
Pre K Consultant

Making a Difference

This small thing has really helped us manage art/collage projects. We put glue in the small plastic containers with lids that the cafeteria uses for grapes. Then we put two or three containers on a table or have them available for the children to pick up and use independently. They store easily and keep glue like new for weeks. Also, it's a great way to recycle!

Also, our Scott Elementary

School Pre-K completed a community service project through DAR called "Invest in the Future: It's in the Bag." Our Pre-K collected close to 300 plastic grocery bags for our local Back Pack Buddies group that packs back packs with food for students needing over-the-weekend nutritional supplement. We created a scrapbook describing our project, and we were thrilled to learn that we won regional and state competition and are waiting on national results.

The children had a great time making posters, collecting bags, and counting them. We were glad to know that we could help the world by recycling and help our friends by working with Back Pack Buddies.

*Julie Spence,
Scott Elementary, Thomas Co.*

Teacher to Teacher

How will you celebrate the end of the Pre-k year with your children/families?

We will celebrate the end of the year with a family picnic at a local park with students and their families. We plan special field day type events with games, activities, special lunches, and snacks. We will spend the final week of school with a spirit week; children will wear crazy socks, inside out clothes, pajamas, and their special shirts we decorated for this week in class.

Morgan Fitzpatrick

We will have a program to highlight some of our favorite songs we've learned throughout the year, as well as a slideshow of special moments (which we will give to all the parents). We will end with a family lunch.

K. Stewart

We do an end of the year celebration at which time the students receive a certificate for completing Georgia's Pre-K Program. We compile pictures from throughout the year and share them on a slideshow at our program. The parents receive a DVD of the slideshow. We also provide the families with information and activities to do with their child over the summer, and we have a pizza celebration inviting the parents to each class.

Miranda Killough

At our end of the year program, the students perform songs for the parents. After the program we celebrate with an ice-cream social for our students and parents.

Janie Reynolds

We plan on grilling burgers and hot dogs with the fixings for the students and families.

Porter H. Warren

Our End of the Year party with our parents is always a fun time. We have a new park close to our school where we host a family picnic. While fathers cook hotdogs, parents socialize and interact with each other. We let the children choose favorite songs and finger plays that they have learned during their year and perform for our parents

Becky Pinson

We plan to have an outdoor carnival themed celebration for our children and families; a big bash with handmade carnival games, popcorn, cotton candy, face painting, and a ton of other fun activities. A photo booth will be set up for picture taking. In addition, each child will receive a class ring (candy ring) and a take home bag.

Stewart County

Assessment

I use my I-phone to record my small group times to collect notes so I do not have to write notes. I also put it on a group that is working independently so I know what those children discussed as they were doing the small group. I listen to the recording when I am entering notes instead of having to write them down twice. Don't know if this helps anyone else, but it helped me.

*Kimberly Pearce,
Lee County Pre-K*

On WSO one thing I have learned is to take pictures of students doing different activities throughout the day, even if you can't write down an anecdotal, allows you to remember the event and details clearly. Also, you can bring up the picture and have the child build up vocabulary through discussions with you one-on-one. Loading up the picture takes a little more time but has paid off in our classroom. Another reason the pictures have aided in note taking is due to how many language barriers we have in our classroom. With no one speaking their language, the pictures have helped us communicate with each other.

*Kelly Techo
Discovery Point #3, Gwinnett County*

Family Connections

To change things up this year, we did not host the usual Doughnuts with Dad event. Last week, we had our very first Picnic with Pops. We invited all of the Pre-K dads to join us from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a picnic on the playground. The students and their dads played outside on the playgrounds or inside in the gym. At lunch time, everyone sat on blankets and enjoyed a picnic lunch. It was a great time for the dads to spend time with their child, while getting to know the other Pre-K dads. Everyone had a wonderful time, and we received much positive feedback from this event.

We love to use Shutterfly as a way to keep the parents informed of all of the upcoming events at our school. At the beginning of the school year, we ask each parent for an email address, so we could invite them to our class site. We have five classes, and each class

creates their own site. Shutterfly offers FREE share sites where you can build your own class site. You can keep updated pictures on your site, so the parents can see the activities and learning that takes place in the classroom. There is also a calendar where you can post upcoming events, birthdays, and special days. You can even have Shutterfly email the parents a reminder the day before each event. The Shutterfly share site also allows you to send a group email or reminder to all of the site members at one time.

While we continue to send paper newsletters home each week, many parents love receiving the information through email. We have had many parents comment on how they love the convenience of the Shutterfly site and that it allows them to feel better connected to the classroom.

Great Beginnings of Sugar Hill, Gwinnett County



Fun in Pre-K



On Wednesday, October 03, 2012, Chatsworth Preschool Inc. celebrated Georgia Pre-K's 20th birthday by having the Chatsworth Fire Department visit. In addition, Murray County Ambulance Service made a surprise visit to the Pre-K.





Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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For updates from Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/gadepreearlycare or Facebook at www.facebook.com/brightfromthestart.

If you have photos, ideas or quotes to share, please send them to preknewsletterde-as@dec.al.ga.gov



Call the BFTS office and Pre-K Consultant on duty at 404-656-5957. Pre-K Consultant contact information also can be found on the website www.dec.al.ga.gov



On Friday, October 5, 2012, Mrs. Gail Cochran baked and decorated a cake with the children to celebrate Pre-K's birthday.

Teacher Highlight

Amanda Hollier

Statham Elementary, Barrow County Board of Education
2013-2014 Teacher of the Year

Master of Early Childhood Education/ESOL and Reading Endorsements – UGA

2011-Present – Statham Elementary/Barrow Co. BOE

2007-2011 – Early Learning Center/Barrow Co. BOE (selected as the 2010-2011 TOTY)

Quotes from Amanda's TOTY application:

"I work toward building strong relationships with parents, team-working with colleagues to meet the needs of our young children, making sure that standards are being met, and assuring that my classroom is a safe, warm, welcoming environment for learning where each child can grow and thrive."

"I know I can make an impact on the futures of our children simply by encouraging children to enjoy school and to love reading, writing, and learning, thus helping them to realize the significance of education."

Married/lives in Athens

Volunteer Work:

Athens Animal Control

Classic City Band (flute)

Barrow Co. Migrant Education Program